
AGSA NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2005

2004 ACHIEVEMENTS

Promoting Accompanists

The Committee is particularly pleased that the Guild's major aim – to promote the status of the Accompanist – featured strongly in 2004. This is in no small part due to the presence of our international Patron, Phillip Moll, during "July – the Month of Accompanists". The publicity generated by his visit (splendid work of our publicist, Christopher Wainwright), ensured that the significance of the accompanist was most effectively promoted. Rarely has a lunch hour concert in Pilgrim Church attracted a near capacity crowd as Phillip's did. His presence added to the excitement for the participants in the Geoffrey Parsons Award and in his excellent master class. It should be known that Phillip gave his services free in support of the work of the Guild as did soprano, Yuko Takemichi, and flautist, Elizabeth Koch. We could not have afforded Phillip's usual fees – we are indeed grateful to all three for their generosity and we made that very clear in the dinner in their honour arranged by the committee.

Young Accompanists

We began encouraging young pianists – secondary and tertiary – in our July concerts in 2003. In 2004 this was even further emphasized with all the 12.10 concerts featuring young accompanists & soloists from schools and the University. This push to promote accompanying amongst younger people will be extended even further in 2005. A Showcase sub-committee consisting of Robert Hunter, Jeffrey Kong, Gina Macri & Julie Sargeant have, during 2004, organized the structure, personnel and funding needed to present the Young Accompanists Showcase in June 2005. This exciting venture involves outstanding soloists and Guild members who will work with secondary school students towards participating in a Master Class and a Public Concert. (See 2005 Events for details). If members know of secondary level students who would benefit from this experience contact Julie Sargeant (8376 7253) for more information. Our first event in 2005 will feature the soloists, this time partnered by professional accompanists, so that our members and the secondary students to be involved can have the pleasure of hearing these outstanding soloists (and our outstanding Accompanists). So a lot of work in 2004 has set the scene for our main thrust in 2005 – to encourage secondary school students to perform as accompanists.

The Month of Accompanists – 2004

The 8 Concerts

As in 2003 the Guild gave Accompanists top billing in these concerts. 22 pianists performed as accompanists, 7 professionals and 15 students. There were 27 associate artists including chamber groups from Schools and the University. It was particularly pleasing to see one teacher, (Gabiella Smart) arrange an entire program in which she, her students & their associates performed. The Elder School of Music (thanks to Diana Weekes) also presented a program arising from their assessments in Accompaniment and Chamber Music. We were thrilled to have so many young performers involved and we were delighted with the outstanding examples of fine music making from our professionals, Margie Ferrie with sopranos, Heather Brooke & Lyn Harris, Nerissa Pearce with mezzo, Guila Tiver and John Hall with lyric bass, Pelham Andrews, and, as already mentioned, Phillip Moll.

The Geoffrey Parsons Award

Our collaboration with the Elder School of Music in presenting the Award has also resulted in the possibility of the winner performing in the Friday Elder Hall Lunch Hour Series which provides the associate artists. Our 2003 winner, Ashleigh Hribar, performed Bartok, Debussy & Stravinsky with Wendy Heiligenberg, violin, and Louise Nowland, clarinet, to an audience of over 800 – larger than the Guild could have provided.

The 2004 Award was won by Michael Ierace from excellent finalists Larissa Schneider and Sharon Chng. Soprano Rosalind Martin sang the set song with each contestant. Phillip Moll chaired the jury.

Phillip Moll Master Class

This outstanding evening showed that excellent collaborative music making is happening in Adelaide. Phillip was extremely impressed with all participants, Alexander Hanysz & Carolyn Lam, Anthony Hunt & Jessica Dean and Julie Sargeant, Stephanie Wake-Dyster & Lisi McGowran. Several members have requested more Master Classes. We hope you were there and please note there is a Master Class with Tim Sexton in the 2005 program.

The Dinner

Attracted over 40 attendees & was a fitting appreciation of Phillip & the many others involved in the Month.

Questionnaire

25 of our members responded to the questionnaire (ie more than a third of our members, which is a reasonable response although we would have liked more!) Not all respondents answered every question. The relative value of our main activities was rated as follows: 1.Parsons Award, 2. Parsons Award Concert = with Social Activities 4.Concerts/Lectures/Interviews etc, 5. Master Classes, 6. Junior Accompanists, 7.Month of Accompanists, 8.The Register, 9. 5MBS broadcasts. The difference between 1 & 9 was minimal and it should be noted that many respondents saw all activities as important but ranked them only because they were asked to do so. We were pleased that by far the strongest response to refresher courses was to Master Classes and we were relieved that there was only a moderate desire for conferences! 13 wanted the Register annually – we hope the proposed website will help here as this is not really a strong enough response to warrant producing it annually. There were a number of useful suggestions from individuals which have or will be addressed by the committee. Thank you all for your positive responses.

Advertising Accompanists

Whether it is the raised profile of the Accompanist, the advertisements placed in the MTA and AMEB literature, the new conditions for accompanists at the Elder School of Music or some other cause, the secretary has noted a major increase in the number of enquiries for accompanists via the phone. Mostly people want someone near home, experience in a specific instrument or for emergencies, in which case sight reading & rapid learning skills are important. For the next Register it might be wise to stipulate more specific areas of expertise (eg clarinet rep) to help in finding the right accompanist to suit the needs.

2005 PLANS

Events

See the outline. We have maintained our usual series including the **July Concerts** which will feature at least 3 of Adelaide's outstanding teacher/performers, Keith Crellin (viola), Elizabeth Koch (flute) and Howard Parkinson (trombone) as Accompanists. The **Geoffrey Parsons Award** will remain in July with the wonderful Roy Howat chairing the panel– please encourage entrants. Michael Ierace will give his **Parsons Award Recital** with the leader of the Tank Stream String Quartet, Sophie Rowell, while she is in Adelaide for Musica Viva. Our association with the Elder School of Music has made this possible. A **Professional Development** event this year will be run in association with ANATS as part of their Spring Academy and will be relevant for both singers and accompanists.

The major new concentration in 2005 is to encourage youth, particularly through the **Young Accompanists Showcase** in June. The Showcase sub-committee (see 2004 achievements) has arranged a quartet of fine performers & experienced tutors as well as Guild members to work with the young accompanists towards a Master Class conducted by Adelaide's own impresario, Timothy Sexton. This will assist greatly in their preparation for the public concert. The sub committee is to be congratulated on receiving funding from Youth Arts S.A. for this project. We are also indebted to Jeffrey Kong and Brighton High School for their support. We regret that committee member, Robert Hunter, who has put so much thought and effort in to the Showcase is transferring to Tasmania. We thank him for his valuable contribution.

Opening Concert.

Rather than teaming our AGM with a social event we decided this year to turn it into a BIG occasion with a concert featuring the soloists for the Young Accompanists Showcase. They will be joined by some of the best of Adelaide's accompanists each pair presenting a bracket which will include the works set for the young accompanists. In this way we hope to give the young performers fine examples of the works they will be preparing as well as encourage awareness in them & their families of the significance of the art of accompanying.

We are trying out a new venue too. Cynthia Poulton Hall is right next to St Peter's Cathedral and there is good parking in the cathedral car park and surrounding streets particularly on a Monday night which we hope suits our members too. We still intend making a social occasion of it with supper following. The AGM will be mercifully short!! Members & friends, please make the effort to attend this "different" opening to our year. We thank the Dean for his generosity in making the Hall available to us at a price we can manage.

Register of Accompanists 2005 - 06

We aim to have this published as soon after the AGM as possible so make sure you respond when you are asked for your details.

Web Site

We are joining the 21st Century. Our website is currently under construction in the hands of Neal Holmes. This will be of great general value in publicizing the importance of our work as well as providing updates of Register listings.

Annual General Meeting

Please take note that this is formal notification of the AGM of AGSA which will take place on Monday March 21 at 7.00pm at the Cynthia Poulton Hall, St Peter's Cathedral, North Adelaide. Committee nominations should reach the secretary no later than one week before the AGM.